"The inhabitants of a settlement are all, or nearly all, nuatkattait, connected, that is, either by blood or by marriage. (2) Since no one person has any recognized authority over the rest, it is this bond of relationship that keeps the people united and maintains peace and harmony in the community. The vicissitudes of life, too, in these regions tend to prevent any discord, for there are many occasions, both in summer and in winter, when sickness or ill-luck in hunting will make a family dependent for a time on its neighbours. The nuatkattait owe special duties to one another. They must provide for each other in sickness, take care of the aged and infirm, the widows and the orphans, and support each other in the blood-feud (3). This gives the community its solidarity. It has a corporate unity, and is called by a tribal name, the suffix miut added to the name of the region it inhabits, or to a prominent place in that region, such as a lake or

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"2. Another word that is sometimes heard taukattait, appears to be synonymous with nuatkattait."

"3. Aksiatak sprained his ankle in the early spring of 1915, and Ikpakhuak was ill for a week or more during the following winter. In both cases the invalids and their families were supported by the rest of the community."

river. Thus the Puivlirmiut is the group or tribe that inhabits the country of Puivlik, and the Kogluktomiut similarly the group that frequents the Kogluktok or Coppermine river. (4)

"4. An individual of the tribe is designated by the addition of the suffix --tak, as Puivlirmiutak, 'a native of Puivlik'."

3: Rasmussen--76 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 101, 621

"The various groups, which are closely connected with one another--and often make mutual visits, hunt together for years at a time, and through intermarriage have become related--are the following: The Ahiarmiut, or the inhabitants of the shores of Queen Maud Sea; the Kêgdlingujârmiut, the people living on Kent Peninsula; the Kûngmiut, who live along a salmon river in Victoria Land west of Cambridge Bay; the Eqalugtôrmiut, likewise at a salmon river close to Cambridge Bay; the Malerisiorfingmiut, who inhabit the country between Kent Peninsula and Bathurst Inlet; the Kiluhigtormiut, at Bathurst Inlet. All these groups say of themselves: We all know one another; in summer we live in our own particular area but meet in winter: we meet for the hunting at the breathing holes, and then there are many of us. It has always been so as far back as people can remember, before the white man came up here. It is these groups that are called the Kigdlinermiut by all those who live more towards the east, whereas among themselves only those who live in Kigdlineq, i. e. Victoria Land, are called Kigdlinermiut."

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221 few more miles. Even the little children had work to
857 do, for this harvest season would last only until May,
224 when the breaking up of the sea-ice would drive the natives from their sealing to fish and hunt caribou on the land.

114 It was time now to decide what my own movements
123 should be during the summer months, and I suggested to Ikpuck that I might join his train to Victoria Island,
123 taking my own outfit. The old man was delighted
597 with the plan, and, having no children of his own,
621 formally adopted me into his family, which consisted of himself and his wife Icehouse, Sculpin or Jennie, Icehouse's daughter by a former marriage, and an adopted nephew named Knife-Blade. The Runner, a married son of Icehouse, intended to join the party; probably also two or three families of near kinsmen. The entire band would assemble on the ice within the next three or four weeks, when Ikpuck would send
000 word to me at the station. In the meantime I could travel east with Cox, who needed a companion and a dog-team for surveying a portion of the coast-line.

The short trip with Cox was a pleasant change from constant association with the Eskimos; it was like moving from one world into another. Yet we could
225 not avoid the natives entirely. Two families were
224 hunting large bearded seals in a bay a few miles east of our station, and a small band had camped near Cape

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and perspiring in every pore, we took cover behind a low ridge eight hundred yards from the beach and waited for the herd to draw near. But the caribou loitered. Four weary hours we lay on the cold snow before they came within range, and then, through bad marksmanship, succeeded in shooting only one.

The Eskimos had many superstitions about the animals and birds; they taught me, for example, to throw away part of the liver of each caribou I killed, to propitiate its wandering spirit. Since the northward migration of the herds each spring, and their migration south again in the autumn, closely followed similar movements of the ptarmigan, the natives transferred to the bird some of the mysterious powers attributed to the caribou. So when Ikpuck shot a ptarmigan on his way back to camp he solemnly knelt in the snow and crooned a chant over its lifeless body. The chant was really a prayer, intended, like the throwing away of the caribou liver, to appease the spirits of the animals and ensure the success of our hunting.

Our little party, as now constituted, held more or less closely together during the next six months. My own immediate family, Ikpuck, Icehouse, and the two children, Jennie and Knife-Blade, have been introduced already; also The Runner, Icehouse's son, and his wife Leaf, who will figure largely in the coming pages. Icehouse's brother, The Listener, was a quiet old man who devoted much of his time to the care of his feeble

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wife. Their seventeen-year-old son Misty was Jennie's favourite companion; the two played at housekeeping together, snared small birds, and shot at ptarmigan with their bows and arrows. Chatterbox, a nephew of Icehouse, was a big, phlegmatic individual who abhorred quarrels and shirked the responsibility of ever taking the initiative. Himself a silent man, despite his name, his main trouble in life was to check the gossip of his wife, who outmatched Icehouse in her zeal for prying into the affairs of other people; but there was no malice in her gossip, and the two lived happily together, well liked by all their associates. Probably a physical peculiarity in Chatterbox contributed not a little to their matrimonial felicity; he was the only man in the country whose head was almost bald, and his wife was proud of his distinction. Why their seven-year-old son should be nearly as bald as his father was not easy to explain; it was certainly not due to disease, for these Eskimos had no infectious diseases.

Parted-Hair, the last hunter in our party, and the sole representative of Ikpuck's family line, was a young man who had married a woman twenty years his senior. His face was exceptionally short and flat, his nose almost swallowed up in his other features, so that even the most charitable of his countrymen could hardly call him prepossessing. Toward the children his manner was somewhat overbearing, but he always showed marked respect to his elders, especially to his

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kinsman Ikpuck. For the rest, he was an energetic hunter, a good sealer, and a very skilful fisherman, qualities that rank high in an Eskimo community. His marriage yielded him no children, but his wife, whose first husband had died a few years earlier, brought a fourteen-year-old son in her train.

Even the children had many little duties to perform in this our last camp on the sea-ice, while the fathers hunted seals and caribou, and the mothers sorted out the household things they intended to leave on the coast, or filled the pokes of blubber they were storing away for the autumn months. Each family had two pokes that weighed, when full, between three hundred and four hundred pounds, and our most pressing task for the moment was to dispose of them. Most people would have found it very unpleasant to cram a bag with oily seal blubber; but the women, accustomed to the task from childhood, merely put on their oldest clothes, rolled up the coat-sleeves, and buried their arms in the greasy mass without the slightest hesitation.

Not all the oil that exuded from the blubber found its way into the pokes. The women rubbed some of it over their faces to mitigate the effect of sunburn, and recommended the same treatment for my own weather-beaten countenance. Sunburn hardly seemed credible when the temperature of the atmosphere remained constantly below the freezing-point; but the sun now shone throughout the twenty-four hours of

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we built our snow-huts last winter; and that other island near it, Ahunga-hungak, which you passed so often with your sled. Long ago, at midsummer when the ice had melted or moved away, some of our people living on Putulik beheld a giant wading across the sea, a giant so tall that his knees stood out above the water and his head seemed to touch the sky. Our people hid in terror among the crags. He landed on Ahunga-hungak, and, seated on its summit, juggled with two rocks that ten men like you and I could hardly move; each time one dropped into his hand a report like a gunshot reached the Eskimos' ears. But our medicine-men, who were more powerful then than they are today, chanted a spell against him. He rose to flee, and in two strides reached the water's edge; but there he fell, and his body changed to a crag. The winds and waves have washed most of it away, but in my childhood we could still see the red belt that encircled his waist. Now that also has disappeared, and only his nose and eyebrows remain. Next winter I will show you his juggling stones, lying on the island's top where he dropped them in his flight."

Soon after this hunting trip, Parted-Hair and his family appeared and pitched their tent beside us. Fortune had not been kind to them, for they had seen no caribou and caught only a moderate quantity of fish. Nevertheless, since they were the visitors, etiquette obliged them to open up their packs and present each

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limited to about a quarter of a mile, unless the wind carried them farther. The animals suffered almost as much as ourselves. Our dogs tried to burrow in the ground to protect their feet and noses, and a young bull caribou, blinded by the cloud of mosquitoes that swarmed around its head, trotted within fifty yards of me without noticing my presence.

The warm weather, too, enlarged the lanes of water round the margins of the lakes and increased the difficulty of crossing onto the ice. Ikpuck therefore decided to return to Lake Ever-Frozen, which, from its size, remained ice-bound all or most of the summer. We first packed the dried fish one stage ahead, then returned for the camping-gear, and, thus travelling, reached in four days the eastern end of the lake not far from our old camping-place. The other families in the band had gathered there already, reunited by the same problem of food supply that a few weeks earlier had caused their dispersal.

My two months of practical training should have rendered me a past master in the fishing technique of my companions, but at this lake they taught me a new device. The largest trout always lay deepest, but none of our lines would reach the bottom of the lake. Moreover a long line, if drawn up quickly hand over hand—or wrist over wrist, in true Eskimo fashion—invariably tangles. Ikpuck's method was to lower his line to the last inch, and, when a fish struck, to run back-

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ring its passage to the sea. To the north lay a broad, sandy plain, the bed of an ancient lake, and beyond, an isolated, rounded hill flanked by soft meadows that were certain to harbour caribou. We all forded the stream without mishap except Jennie, who had dropped behind when readjusting the packs of two dogs. I went back to look for her, while the others pushed on across the plain. The poor child was nearly a mile in the rear, still struggling cheerfully with the ill-balanced packs that persisted in slipping under the animals' bellies. I rearranged them for her, and we hurried on to overtake our companions; but a fierce sand-storm now swept the plain, and our progress was slow and painful, with frequent returnings to urge on the dogs. Dogs and storm combined delayed us so greatly that the hunters, tired of waiting for us at the hill, went on ahead to intercept a herd of caribou they had sighted, leaving little Knife-Blade to watch for me and request me to join them with all speed.

This hunt well illustrated the unity of an Eskimo band. Every individual, man, woman, and child, took part in it—except The Listener's wife, who, being old and feeble, remained to guard the packs; and both men and women contributed to the discussion that decided the tactics to be employed. At the foot of the hill stretched a lake three-quarters of a mile in diameter, and, beyond it, a wide, grassy plain where fifteen caribou were grazing. The plain rose in a gentle incline

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few days, and only occasional stragglers appeared in the vicinity. Our comrades to the west, who wished to inspect their caches before returning to the hills, moved over and camped beside us. But the evening after their arrival Icehouse quarrelled with The Chatterbox's wife concerning some blubber that was given to the dogs, and, after exchanging real Billingsgate, reduced her adversary to tears. Ikpuck scolded her and retired to bed. The remainder of the party soon followed his example; but when Icehouse, lingering to the last, crept in beside her husband, he sternly ordered her to sleep in an empty sealskin tent that we used for a kitchen. She protested vehemently, for a cold north wind was blowing and the thermometer nearly at zero. At a repetition of the order she began to dress, but he tore the clothes from her hands and snapped, "Get out." The poor woman, speechless with terror, fled through the tent door naked, and disappeared into the darkness. I said to Ikpuck, "Tell her to come in again. She will freeze to death." He slipped on his jacket and looked inside the cooking-tent. It was empty, nor did he know where she had gone. Five minutes later I found her in the tent of Parted-Hair's family, shivering under a spare caribou robe; but when I urged her to return she answered, "Ikpuck is too angry with me. I am afraid." I assured her that she would suffer no harm, and, returning to my sleeping-bag, told Ikpuck to drop the

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533 highest relief from the gloom and perils of the long Arctic night. Nature, when she condemned them to this twilight land, granted them the gift of song, and, however harsh their voices, their melodies revealed a [126] deep sense of musical beauty. The example given below was transcribed unchanged from one of my phonograph records, and only the harmonies added to adapt it to the pianoforte.

221 The natives moved away at last to the Liston and 123 Sutton Islands, whither Patsy and I followed them; but we returned to the station for Christmas, accompanied 621 by Jennie and another child. Our party had grown from nine the previous winter to seventeen, half of 123 whom were Eskimo assistants from the west. Mainly for their pleasure we set up a Christmas tree, filled their stockings with presents, and held sports in the snow outside the station house. Patsy contributed an unexpected item to the program of events. He carved the figure of a bird from a snow-block, and caused a stampede for shotguns and .22 rifles by abruptly announcing that a ptarmigan had settled at our door; three men levelled their guns at the dummy bird before the trick was discovered. With presents and games the fête succeeded gloriously, and the cook rounded it off with a Christmas dinner that included real mince pies and an enormous plum pudding. Through it all little Jennie and her playmate wandered about in a daze, neither comprehending our strange actions, nor the

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Being sorely in need of kindling we carried away the board on our sled, and congratulated ourselves on not having to cut shavings of wet driftwood at the end of the day's march, when our fingers were always freezing from cold and exhaustion. The matter passed entirely from my memory, along with other trivial incidents of the journey, until it was mentioned at the station a few weeks later. Then the storm of indignation that burst over my head dumbfounded me. Whose, after all, was the greater vandalism? Mine to destroy with fire the record of my enterprising colleagues, or theirs to mar with an unseemly biscuit box the enduring monument of a gallant explorer?

From the monument we struck north-east until we came to a deserted village of forty snow-huts, representing a population of perhaps 140. The inhabitants had divided into two bands, one travelling north-east, the other north-west, to different sealing-grounds. We followed the latter's sled-trails, partly because they were more numerous, partly also to escape the east wind against which we had struggled all the way from Bernard Harbour. Not a soul was visible as we drove up to the new village through the driving snow; even the dogs, drowsing in the passageways, failed to notice our arrival. The Runner shouted and disappeared into the first hut, to emerge a moment later with a smiling youth whom he introduced to me as his brother. Then the dogs began to howl, people came tumbling out from

THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

Spring came suddenly about the middle of March, 132
when the thermometer rose well above zero. Our 437
station then became the Mecca for tribes from as far 123
east as the Musk-ox people, who, like the nearer Eskimos, clamoured for trade goods, rifles, and ammunition. These were not the people I had visited three 621
or four weeks previously, but kinsmen from the second camp a few miles farther east, who had lingered at their new sealing-ground until milder weather enabled them to undertake the long journey to Bernard Harbour without hardship. Their leader was a short, white- 622
bearded medicine-man, brusque but always dignified in 157
his movements, and with a shrewd, kindly face that attracted immediate attention. Undoubtedly he possessed great force of character, for his tribesmen reverenced him as a father and complied with all his wishes; nominally the Eskimos recognize no chiefs among themselves, considering every man the equal of every other.

The old man taught me some of his ancient lore, and 787
even summoned a familiar spirit that I might record a [126]
shamanistic séance on the phonograph. His followers credited him with the most fantastic powers; he could fly through the air like a bird, go down into the ocean like a fish, see what was happening hundreds of miles away. But the old man never boasted of these things; they might be true, he said, and they might not, for he lost all consciousness of himself when the familiar spirits took possession of his body.

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the past, and a new mechanical age has brought magazine rifles, shotguns, steel traps, and even gasolene engines. The caribou are passing with the bows and arrows; of all the herds that once crossed the narrow strait to Victoria Island hardly one now reaches the Arctic shore. Strange diseases are making their appearance, disease that the old-time Eskimo never heard of and for which he has no name. The stern laws of civilization have descended on the land; no longer is infanticide tolerated, or the blood-feud allowed to run its course. "Furs, furs, more furs," is the white man's cry. "Without furs there is no salvation, no ammunition to shoot the scattered game and satisfy your hungry children." The tribal bands where each man toiled for all and shared his food in common are resolving into their constituent families, and every family vies with the rest in the race for wealth and worldly prosperity.

Whither will it all lead? Fifty years ago the cyclone swept over the Eskimos of the Mackenzie River delta, and of its two thousand inhabitants a scant two hundred survive. Fifty years earlier it struck Baffin Island with a similar result. Will history, fifty years hence, record the same fate for this twilight land where for two years we carried on our mission? Were we the harbingers of a brighter dawn, or only messengers of ill-omen, portending disaster?

EPILOGUE

Within ten years of our departure from Bernard Harbour one third of them had been swept away by influenza, and of the hundred Eskimos gathered around the radio station at Coppermine no fewer than twenty-six suffered from advanced tuberculosis.

Was this inevitable? Had we been more conscious of our responsibilities could we have spared them so rude an awakening, so painful an entry into what we call a civilized world? Or does fate spin her web remorselessly, blind to human hopes and weaknesses, indifferent to human suffering?

The children of Jennie's generation who escaped the new diseases underwent a social and economic revolution. Even as we sailed away traders entered their country seeking fox-furs, always fox-furs; and for those pelts so useless for real clothing they offered rifles, shot-guns, steel tools and other goods that promised to make life much easier. So the Eskimos abandoned their communal seal hunts and scattered in isolated families along the coasts in order to trap white foxes during the winter months when the fur of that animal reaches its prime. Their dispersal loosened the old communal ties that had held the families together. The men no longer labored for the entire group, but hunted and trapped each one for his family alone. Their diet and costume changed: more and more it became the diet and costume of the white man. For they had to purchase their winter's supply of food from the trading stores, since trapping